

The Colossal Stupidity of the Nashua Legal Office

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Attorney Bolton - Nashua Corporation Counsel

The Nashua Legal office is in need of a major overhaul. Like the Assessing Office, the Mayor has promoted incompetent leadership and lawyers who ignore their professional conduct codes and disregard citizen's rights. Who are the major offenders? Attorney Bolton and Attorney Leonard.

In 2020, a malicious practice was initiated by Attorney Bolton and former attorney, Mayor Donchess, to push all general information requests into the legal office, treating each one as a litigation matter and a formal right-to-know request. At the time, there was a Right-to-Know lawsuit filed regarding assessing matters, but the legal office assumed responsibility for all requests from city department. Requests to the clerk's office, the building, public works and finance departments were scooped up by the legal office forcing citizens into a direct interface with the Attorneys.



Attorney Celia Leonard - Deputy Corporation Counsel

The information denials started piling up with phrases like "overly broad, unreasonably

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citizens to inform us on how records were maintained so citizens could provide clarity to their requests. They would pile on indiscernible legalese language in response to requests and then invite citizens to respond back. When attempting to ask for clarification, the legal

office would respond that RSA 91-A does not require the City to answer questions.

The lawyers effectively tied our shoelaces together while we were sitting at the table, tripping us up every step of the way.

Citizens began contacting me about their confusing email responses from the City lawyers and asking for advice and help. Most cannot afford lawyers. My inability to find a solution to these barriers created by the legal office was frustrating and harassing. I was barely keeping my head above water with my own lawsuits, certainly would not recommend my costly legal approach to anyone, and was making little progress in receiving my records.

This response from Attorney Bolton's office to a request for records submitted March 7, 2021 for Assesshelp mails submitted to the office from January 1, 2021 to March 1, 2021 was a classic deflecting response. Assesshelp is the email address citizens can use to submit general question or abatement applications to the Assessing Office. The request was not an exhaustive search. Typical of the responses I was receiving is the following:

Overall, this request for governmental records is unclear, overbroad and not reasonably described. For example: Does your request intend to subsume all emails received by the assesshelp email address

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personal correspondence, unrequested commercial solicitation, etc.)? Is your request only for those emails which are readily available (e.g.: not subject to initial and legal deletion, unintentional deletion, file corruption, etc.), or is the request made with the presumption that it can and should be satisfied verbatim?

The Attorney then wanted me to write back with clarification but I did not understand what was being asked of me. My failure to write back with clarification caused the lawyer to chastise me and label me as uncooperative. This became the material of a lawsuit. I never got to the bottom of Attorney Bolton's intention of this response. As a pro se plaintiff lacking legal training, I failed to call Attorney Bolton as a witness in my initial filing. For two years, Attorney Bolton's legal office crushed its citizens, violating not only our civil rights but the spirit and intent of the open records law.

Any small victories won in these cases have been overshadowed by the failure of the legal system to recognize this type of harassment and unethical behavior and put a stop to it. Who failed us? It starts with the Attorneys. My right to know attorney was watching this unfold and not agreeing with it at all, but never filed a complaint with the professional conduct committee (PCC) of the Supreme Court. Unsurprisingly, lawyers don't file on other lawyers; the snitch thing is not popular.

Superior Court dropped the ball and should have recognized with all the lawsuits submitted that something was going sideways in the legal office. The judge should have filed with the PCC or written a strongly worded order that pushed the legal office back into its lane and separated citizens from direct contact with the city attorneys. There are professional conduct

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General's office for 2 years asking for help. We have almost a half dozen rejection letters stating that the AG's office is a criminal justice office, municipal issues are not covered by that office and citizens must use the remedies of RSA 91-A and go to the local court. Our AG's office needs a municipal branch of oversight.

These colossally stupid practices created by Attorney Bolton with or without Donchess' blessing set the stage for a costly litigation mess. Bolton, Leonard, and Donchess have very effectively made public examples out of record seeking citizens claiming they victimized the City. This dark triad has mobilized City Hall employees to marginalize these citizens and remove them from participation in city government.

It is time for citizens to push out these dark forces. This Mayor must be voted out of office. The PCC and the State must make an example out of Attorney Bolton's and Attorney Leonard's despicable practice of municipal law, disbar them and enact oversight to prevent this from happening elsewhere.



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